

TESTIMONY OF MARCO FRANCIA IN SUPPORT OF CONTINUED FUNDING FOR THE CONNECTICUT FAIR HOUSING CENTER

My name is Marco Francia. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of continuing \$227,500 in funding for the Connecticut Fair Housing Center.

I reside in Hamden. I am here to speak in support of continued funding for the Connecticut Fair Housing Center. My story may be a little different from other people the Connecticut Fair Housing Center has assisted. I am a landlord. I purchase distressed buildings in inner city neighborhoods in New Haven and Hartford. I rehabilitate them into desirable housing and then manage them myself. I am committed to providing high quality housing and improving the neighborhoods where I own property.

When I was in search of liability insurance for one of my properties, my application was rejected. The reason? Because my property had tenants using state and federal housing vouchers, often called Section 8 or RAP, to help pay their rent. My application was resubmitted and this time, I was offered a policy, but with a surcharge of hundreds of dollars because of the presence of tenants with rent subsidies. In addition, the policy stated that I could rent no more than 25% of the units in my building to tenants with vouchers. The insurance company wanted me to sign a statement that I would not exceed that percentage.

I am not only a landlord, but also a police officer. It is my job to know the law in both capacities. I know it is illegal to discriminate against people based on their lawful source of income.

I reported to the Connecticut Fair Housing Center that insurance companies were forcing landlords to discriminate against people based on their lawful source of income. The Fair Housing Center took my case to force insurance companies to respect the law of the State of Connecticut that protect people from discrimination based on stereotypes about voucher holders and convinced one of the most respected law firms in the country to provide me with free legal representation. Our litigation is on-going, but I am confident that with the help of the Center my rights and those of the thousands of people in Connecticut who rely on government housing subsidies will be vindicated. Please support the Connecticut Fair Housing Center.